San Diego's "Attitude" Arrests

Dear Challenge:

It was recently revealed in the San Diego Union that the San Diego cops make about 800 "attitude" arrests per month. An attitude arrest is when the cop throws you in jail because he doesn't like your attitude (color, politics or class)! This is perfectly "legal" and people are held in jail for up to three days, before being released with no charges filed.

The chief of police and the press acknowledged this over a year ago, but in that time nothing has changed. The real figure is probably even higher—more like a thousand arrests of this type a month, 12,000 a year.

Clearly the cops are given free rein to terrorize people. Does this occur in your city? How does this differ from police power in South Africa, or under any form of fascism?

A Reader,
San Diego

NOT ALL INMATES ARE CRIMINALS

Conditions At Jail Assailed

District Attorney Edwin L. Miller maintains that deplorable conditions in the county jail have been tolerated so long because the public thinks of inmates as "those people" — as killers and rapists who deserve whatever they get.

To be sure, there are some fapists and killers among the inmates housed daily in the maximum security jail, but it does not take commission of a felony to end up there.

Most inmates are awaiting trial and some will be found not guilty. Many others, especially those on the first floor, are accused of such misdemeanors as drunken driving, and others are accused of petty violations, such as failing to pay a traffic ticket.

Inmates, attorneys and others who deal with those in jail know that not all the inmates are criminals. As one inmate said, "They (the police) don't care. They'll put anybody in here, and I mean for some pretty thickens—things. And it can be any ind of person."

A close look at the details of several arrests confirms a view expressed by many defense attorneys that jail overcrowding is aggravated by the numbers of people taken to jail who should not have been. And these arrests occur in every part of the city and involve people of all backgrounds.

Attorney Tom Adler said he has

had many clients who were professional people, college educated with no criminal record, who, usually becase they had a few drinks and drove, found themselves in a jail cell with knowledgeal te cons and intolerant, short-tempered deputies.

Adler added that most people in San Diego rarely stop to think that they could find themselves in a cell. People do not always think through the consequences of drinking and driving, and may not even know that police officers sometimes arrest on a mistake or whim, he said.

"I think people would be absolutely shocked if they knew what went on in that jail," Adler said.

"Anybody can ead up here," noted one young man who found out the hard way. Gene Allen, 24, an articulate biology student at UCSD who recently left the Harine Corps, was driving home from work May 17 when he was stopped by a San Diego police officer. The officer ran a warrant check on him, and the computer that records local warrants for law enforcement officers reported that Allen had at unpaid speeding ticket — a report that turned out to be in error.

Allen insisted to the officer that he had paid the ticket two years before, but the officer bocked Allen in jail on a charge of failure to appear in court. Allen's \$60 bail was posted within an hour out he remained in

jail about eight hours.

When Allen appeared in cour produced the receipt for the ticket, and the charges were dismissed. Even though Allen says he never was given a reason for being stopped (he suspects it was because he was a black driving in a white neighborhood), he did not express bitterness.

He did, however, say he would like to see county officials experience the jail from the inside the way he did. "They'd close it down," he said.

The same May night that Allen was jailed, a La Jolla scientist, who owns a house and has no previous record, also was jailed by a San Diego police officer.

The scientist, who asked not to be named, was charged with reckless driving. Police procedure is to issue a citation for such a charge, but the officer put him in handcuffs, and, after driving him to police headquarters and running an errand, deposited him at the jail, where he spent the better portion of an unpleasant night

He expressed the view that the officer took him to jail because he argued the validity of the ticket, and summed up conditions at the jail by calling it a "pit."

He is contesting the ticket.

Twenty-four-year-old Alan McGlade, who never before had been arrested, spent a night in the felony cell on the first floor of county



Staff Photo

Alan McGlade, 24, never before arrested, spent the night in the felony cell of county jail where some of the tougher inmates stole his food and frightened

him. McGlade had committed no crime and, like many others who have spent a night in the jail, he never had expected to end up there.

jail, where, he said, some of the tougher inmates stole his food and frightened him. McGlade had committed no crime.

return expensive video equipment to a friend. McGlade was following a friend in another car about midnight when the friend was stopped by a San Diego police patrolman because of a defective light.

McGlade parked around the block, but by the time he got back to where his friend and the officer were, his friend already had been given a warning citation and was driving away.

McGlade ran back toward his car, but the officer stopped him. McGlade said the officer took his keys, opened the car and searched it, and asked him where he got the video tape player.

McGlade told the officer he had borrowed it and was on his way to return it, but the officer demanded a bill of sale.

McGlade told the officer he did not have one, but said he would go to the owner's house, or call him and prove his story. McGlade said the officer replied, "I think you stole it," handcuffed him and put him in the patrol car.

McGlade's friend then arrived, and told the same story without prompting. The friend was told that if he did not "shut up," he, too, would be arrested, both said.

McGlade said that when the officer was handling the video tape machine, he pulled two video cassettes out of it that were marked with McGlade's name and his place of employment, which he believes shows that the officer did not really think he had stoles it.

McGlade said the officer was with a training officer, and that he thought the experienced officer was "showing off" for the younger officer.

The police report of his arrest, filed by the trainee, does not differ substantially from McGlade's account. The officer said in the report that McGlade was detained at first for "prowling," and that later the officer noticed the video tape player. The officer noted that McGlade's demeanor was "polite."

McGlade's demeanor was "polite."
McGlade said the officer drove him to police headquarters, where he waited in a police car with his hands cuffed behind his back. "The cops walk back and look inside at you like you're dirt, and they are inside (police headquarters) laughing, having coffee. It's not very pleasant."

McGlade was booked on suspicion of receiving stolen property. He was put in the felony cell on the first floor, where he said experienced cons would not let him have a blanket, sleep on a bunk or eat. "I was afraid to ask for my sandwich back when it was taken from me. It was sort of apparent that I had not been there before."

McGlade said his bail was \$2,100, but he did not find out what that meant until he was out. "I didn't

know about bail bondsmen, and the deputies didn't explain. It was frightening to me. I didn't know what was going on. You can't do any work in your own favor to get out, especially if you don't know the repes."

The next morning, McGlade's friends, including the owner of the video machine and a lawyer, went to police headquarters. They said it was difficult to find anyone who knew about the case on Saturday, but they convinced a watch commander to have the charges dropped, and McGlade was ordered freed.

He got out Saturday night, about 20 hours after his arrests

McGlade said he was amazed by the postcript to his encounter: an Orwellian letter from the city saying his experience was a "detention," not an arrest.

He echoed a sentiment frequently heard from those arrested for the first time and taken in handcuffs to the maximum security San Diego County Jail. "I never expected to be in there."

- By Carl M. Cannon

LINION AUG 22 1979 Let Justice Be Done

It is unfortunate that the America's Finest City Week picnic in Balboa Park was marred by what some regard as an "attitude arrest" by a San Diego policeman. And yet, if the incident, involving a prominent banker and chairman of the Finest City Week celebration, is settled as visibly as it began, it may contribute something to public knowledge of police practices.

The complaint is heard with rising frequency that police make what are called "attitude arrests" of persons whose only offense is giving them a hard time without committing any real crime at all. Mayor Pete Wilson, who was present at the

picnic, is one of those who believes that's what happened to the Finest City Week chairman, Alan Lord.

Police Chief William Kolender, who has been firm in his opposition to attitude arrests, also believes the arrest was unwarranted. However, Officer Rodney B. Smith, who says he was pushed around by Mr. Lord, thinks he did the right thing in making the arrest.

There are clearly some guiding principles to be followed. One is that, except in limited instances specified by law, a person should be able to treat a police officer in the same manner that he would, with impunity, treat a fellow citizen. The other is that pushing someone is not conducive to a peaceful settlement of disagreements.

The Police Department has handed the case over to the city attorney to decide whether a prosecution is warranted. The mayor believes the case should go to court and we agree.

If, indeed, battery was committed upon a police officer, justice should be done in public in Municipal Court. On the other hand, if Mr. Lord is being hassled because he had an angry confrontation with an off-duty policeman, the practice of attitude arrests should be laid bare for San Diegans to see.

FINEST CITY' CHAIRMAN CALLED BULLY

Leader Raps Lord Probe

By CHRISTOPHER COOK Staff Writer, The San Diego Union

The president of police officer Rodney Smith's union charged yesterday that the battery investigation of America's Finest City Week Chairman Alan Lord was biased and that he wants the matter investigat-

ed by the U.S. atterney's offices San Diego Police Officers Association President Jack Pearson also characterized Lord's action as that of a "bully" and said that "there are people who go to jail every day for less than this.'

The remarks were made at a press conference called by Pearson at the Police Academy in Miramar. It was the latest round in a squabble that began when a group of off-duty police officers and their families led by Smith attempted to picket the America's Finest City Week picnic in Balboa Park on Aug. 18.

Reached at home by telephone yesterday, Lord groaned when asked about the characterization of him as a "bully," and said he wished the matter "would just go away."

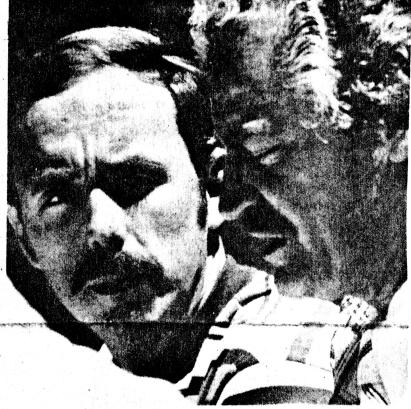
Pearson's remark came at the end of the press conference as television reporters and crews from channels 10 and 8 were dismantling their equipment.

"People should be able to go around the world without being pushed around by these bullies . . . That's why I originally became a police officer; to stop these bullies," Pearson said.

City Attorney John Witt, whose office investigated the battery complaint, said that he would welcome an investigation. "I told my deputy to handle it exactly the same as any other complaint.

On Aug. 18, Lord, vice president of the Bank of San Diego, tried to stop the pickets as Mayor Wilson was addressing the crowd from a podium. The pickets were demanding higher salaries for police officers.

Lord allegedly took Smith by the arm and words were exchanged.



Officer Rodney Smith listens to his union president, Jack Pearson, call for a federal investigation into dismissal of battery charges.

Smith then pressed a citizen's arrest battery complaint, which prompted Wilson to call the incident 'an abuse of police power."

Police Chief Bill Kolender immediately ordered an investigation.

It was revealed Monday that the citation against Lord had been pulled back and that Smith had been escorted to police headquarters for questioning.

Later in the week Kolender, who at first appeared annoyed by Smith's actions, announced that the citation was legitimate and should be pursued. Friday, Witt announced that there was not enough evidence against Lord to obtain a conviction and that he was dropping the mat-

Yesterday, Pearson came to Smith's defense, charging that Witt's decision not to prosecute amounted to a violation of the policeman's civil rights. "Police officers appear to be a class of people who live under different standards.'

Pearson stopped short when asked if he was implying that there are two standards of justice in San Diego, one for persons of Lord's stature and another for those less successful.

He pulled a POA office telephone message from his shirt pocket and quoted its contents: a message from another police officer expressing disgust over the incident.

The message informed Pearson that the caller was going on duty "in

(Continued on B-4, Col. 1)

Aug 2 6 1979 Præsident Says Probe Of Lord Biased

Continued from B-1)

the barrio" where, he said, the law requires him to arrest people for less-serious incidents than the Lord-Smith confrontation.

Pearson put the message back into his pocket and said: "I think that says it. I'd rather stick to my previous statement.'

Witt, reached at home, said, "I would hope that's not true. After all, it's the police who are responsible for the enforcement. We just prosecute what they bring us.'

Witt also said that if the incident had been between Lord and any other private citizen, the case would have been referred to the city's paralegal referee system designed to handle neighborhood squabbles and settle minor disputes out of court.

Under that system "it probably would never have gone to court,"

Witt said.

But, Smith said he still thinks Lord should go to court "like everybody else.'

"If a judge says, 'Smith, you're wrong,' then, fine. I won't argue with that

He said he still feels his actions were correct and that "it is a matter between myself and Mr. Lord that has been blown out of proportion . . . It's become a political issue.'

Probe Not 1979 Requested In 'Pushing'

By KEN MIMMS
Staff Writer, The San Diego Union

Despite a much publicized decision to seek a county, state or federal probe of a shoving match between himself and America's Finest City Week Chairman Alan Lord, police officer Rodney Smith has not asked for that investigation.

"Smith definitely wants to pursue it but I don't know how or who will be contacted first," Anthony DiCerchio, a Police Officer's Association spokesman, said yesterday,

Representatives of the district attorney and the U.S. Attorney here said yesterday Smith had not formally asked for their help.

DiCerchio said POA attorney Richard Castle is "trying to handle it. He is trying to find out where to get an investigation without stepping on anyone's toes."

Deputy State Attorney General Robert Cook said a request "of that nature normally would be passed to the district attorney or the city attorney for action.

"We just don't get involved in that kind of thing," Cook said from his Los Angeles office.

Smith alleges he was pushed by Lord, Aug. 18, as Lord attempted to dissuade Smith and a group of picketing off-duty police officers and members of their families. The group turned up in the park to picket the opening ceremonies of America's Finest City Week as part of a wage dispute between the POA and the city.

Lord said he only wanted to divert the pickets away from the area when Smith made a citizen's arrest charging Lord with battery. Lord was issued a citation by an uniformed officer on the basis of Smith's complaint.

LOCAL NEWS

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SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, SUNDAY MORNING, NO

By BARBARA MORAN

Staff Writer, The San Diego Union

young man lounging on the Ocean Beach pier recently wound up in jail charged with public drunkenness. The man insists he wasn't drinking but was arrested because he argued when officers began searching his knapsack.

Jail records show he was released without further action the next day.

More than a year ago, a series of articles in The San Diego Union dealing with County Jail showed that San Diego police sometimes put people in jail not because they commit crimes, but because they behave discourteously toward officers — so-called "attitude arrests."

After the articles appeared, Police Chief William Ko-

rated capacity of 813 by next August.

Sheriff John Duffy, who oversees the jail, told a City Council Rules Committee meeting last week: "I submit to you, you are part of the problem (of jail overcrowding), and you should be part of the solution."

The city manager was ordered to prepare a report on the subject of "attitude arrests," and on another police practice known as "overcharging", or "overbooking." Overbooking occurs when a suspect is charged with more serious offenses than he or she actually is believed to have committed.

The sheriff and county supervisors have maintained that police feel free to put persons who annoy them in jail since overcrowding is a county problem. The jail is run by the county, while the police department is part of city government.

System On Trial: Time Behind Bars Without A Crime

lender ordered his officers to issue more field citations and make fewer misdemeanor arrests requiring jail time.

Any officer who violates the policy against attitude arrests is "a good candidate for termination," said Deputy Police Chief K.J. O'Brien. Other penalties for violation can include "heavy suspensions" and official reprimands although O'Brien added that no officer has been found to be in violation in the past year.

County statistics, however, show that as many as 700 persons a month are being put in jail by the police and then released hours or days later without further pro-

ceedings against them.

Now, because of a court order, county agencies are being forced to act. Superior Court Judge James Focht ruled last May, as the result of a lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union, that overcrowding in the jail constituted "cruel and unusual punishment." He ordered the population there reduced from over 1,000 to its

The San Diego police force, however, sends more people to County Jail than any other arresting agency. So far this year, out of 73,647 bookings, 41,752 came from the city police. Eighteen other agencies accounted for the remaining 31,895 bookings.

During a recent meeting of the county advisory Detention Policy Board, made up of court, police and jail officials, Chief Kolender - speaking of the supervisors asked: "Who are they to give me direction as to who goes into jail and who doesn't?"

The San Diego Coalition for Alternatives to Jail and Prison is a private lobbying group composed of attorneys, probation officers, educators, correctional counselors and church leaders. According to a report presented to the supervisors in May by it and the Legal Aid Society of San Diego, attitude arrests and overbooking have "historically been a contributing factor to jail overcrowding."

(Continued on B-10, Cot. 1)





Attitude Arrests' Still A Sore Point

(Continued from B-1)



cies" to deal with the problem of attitude arrests. "Adadhered to on a 100 percent basis. Admittedly, they are

According to the report, an attitude arrest occurs when an officer takes into custody a person who has not actually committed a crime but who shows, in the officer's opinion, "discourtesy, belligerency or lack of respect."

One man, located through jail records, spent 15 hours in jail after being pulled over by police for a faulty tail light on a Saturday evening in August. The man, who asked to not be identified, said he objected when police began

searching his automobile. "That really aggravated them," he said in an interview, them to see if they are completely I knew the search was illegal. One officer said, Tsfnell alcohol on your breath. I told him I had just come from the airport where I dropped off a friend and had a beer in the bar.

"Next thing I knew, the officer said. 'II there is anything in your car you want, you better get it. You're going

downtown. Jail records confirm that the man spent the night in jail in after being charged with public drunkenness. He was released the next afternoon on what police call an "849.B2."

That section in the state penal code, in addition to a provision known as "849.B1," allows police great discretion in releasing arrested persons. Section 849.B2 reads: "Any peace officer may release from custody, instead of taking such person before a magistrate, any person arrested without a warrant whenever. 1. He is satisfied that there are insufficient grounds for making a criminal complaint against the person arrested. 2. The person arrested

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Kids! Come seé the and have Breakfas at Mission Va

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Marie Hitchcock, "the puppet lady", will be his elves for the annual "Breakfast with S may be purchased from the cashler in the second floor for only 2.95 per person. purchased prior to each breakfast da

Computer Helps, But Cop Does Job

Jail Without Crime: Trial For Police

(Continued from B-10)

was arrested for intoxication only, and no further proceedings are desirable."

The arrest is then listed as "detention only."

Jail statistics reveal that 849.B2 was used 555 times in June, 532 times in July, 613 times in September and 564 times in October. Statistics were not available for August.

"I was really angry," recalled the man jailed in August.
"I was supposed to go to Disneyland with friends on Sunday, and instead I sat in jail for nothing. I didn't know the



Superior Court Judge James Focht ruled last May, as the result of a law-suit brought by the ACLU, that overcrowding in the jail constituted "cruel and unusual punishment." He ordered the population there reduced from over 1,000 to its rated capacity of 813 by next August.

term 'attitude arrest' existed until I called an attorney to see about getting some retribution.

"He told me to forget it. 'It happens all the time in this county,' he said."

The purpose of an attitude arrest, according to the Legal Aid-Coalition report, is to allow the police officer "to inconvenience the arrestee and impress him with police authority."

"Attitude arrests are not allowed by any statutory authority in California," the report continues.

"It is not illegal to behave in a discourteous or disrespectful manner towards a police officer. A legal arrest requires the commission of a defined criminal act. The offense may be relatively minor (e.g., possession of a glass bottle on a public beach) but it must be a defined crime."

The report states that the most common code sections used by police "to justify attitude arrests" are public inebriacy, disturbing the peace, drunken driving, resisting arrest and littering. "Public inebriacy is particularly subject to abuse," it said, "since blood-alcohol tests aren't commonly used as evidence for conviction" (as they are in drunk driving cases).

If a citizen really aggravates an officer, the report found, the officer may charge the person with drunken driving and then refuse to bring the person to County Jail's quick-release area for common drunks. That means the defendant has to go through a lengthy booking procedure instead.

Closely related to attitude arrests, the report states, is the practice of overbooking. Felony charges are made "so that the inmate cannot qualify for low bail or release on his own recognizance," it said.

(Continued on B-12, Col. 1)





JAIL WITHOUT CRIME?

Police Defend Arresting Procedures

(Continued from B-11)

plater, persons booked on such charges can be released by police through penal code Section 825, which provides the release of any person held in jail for more than days without seeing a magistrate.

dail records reveal that an average of 100 cases a month are Section 825 cases. "Police can arrest somebody and let them sit in jail for two or three days until they decide to let them out." The deputy district attorney.

"Sometimes they just don't send any paper work to this office, so we don't even know an arrest has been made. The guy may post bail or get out on bond eventually, but no further action is taken against him."



"You are part of the problem (of jail overcrowding), and you should be part of the solution," Sheriff John Duffy told the City Council Rules Committee. The city manager then was ordered to prepare a report on the subject of "attitude arrests" and another practice known as "overbooking."

When a person posts bond or makes bail, he is not listed statistically as an 825 case, even though his case may never be pursued beyond arrest. County officials estimate that as many as 50 additional cases a month may be "igst" after a suspect gets out of jail through bond or bail.

Stephen D. McGeary was arrested on Nov. 6 and spent the night in jail. He contends he was sitting in his car in a parking lot reading a book when police approached him and began searching his vehicle. He says he objected, acknowledging that his objection was vigorous.

Next thing McGeary knew, he says, he was at County Jail being booked for possession of a controlled substance.

He denied having any drugs in his possession.

Jail records show that he posted \$200 bond and was released seven hours later. On Nov. 13, he was scheduled to appear in court for felony arraignment. He showed up, along with a reporter, and his case was never called.

"They're trying to bury it," he said of police at that time. Fearing he might be charged later with failure to appear, McGeary visited the offices of the marshal, city attorney and district attorney to learn why his case was not called.

He says he was told by Derenda Coppock of the district attorney's office: "We never got any paper work from the Police Department. If they don't bring the paper work in here, we don't know anything about it."

McGeary agreed to talk to a reporter even though he said he would not be surprised if police renewed the charges as a result of his statements. "I don't care," he said. "Somebody has to say something. This stuff ends up costing everyone more money."

Asked about McGeary case, police officials said they

were "looking into it."

In another incident traced through court and jail records, Gordon Glenn was arrested July 28. According to members of his family, he was visiting from out of state and was pulled over in his car by a police officer in Ocean Beach.

His car was searched over his protests. The officer found a canister of chemical Mace in Glenn's glove compartment. While the canister was not illegal where Glenn lived, it is illegal in California. He was taken downtown and booked for possession of a tear-gas weapon, a felony.

He spent two days in jail. The DA's office declined to

issue a complaint in the case.

A spokesman for the district attorney said it declines to handle cases primarily as a result of improper searches, as well as insufficient evidence based on incomplete field investigations.

"It is very complex," said assistant chief O'Brien. "It is not all black and white. Most officers know a good, valid

arrest when they see one.

"But there are complexities. Maybe a DA will find that the search went a little too far. Maybe the person consents to a search but later says he didn't. But the officers' mistakes are made in good faith, not in malice."

O'Brien also stresed that in many cases rejected by the DA, officer error is not the reason. Complainants change their minds about pressing charges, he said, and other times, witnesses cannot be located during investigations.

Eleven months ago the Police Department assigned a liason officer to the DA's office and the system has improved considerably, according to John Hewicker, chief of the complaints division for the San Diego DA's office.

Detective Sgt. Don Smith studies arrest reports before submitting them to the DA for complaints to be issued. "When we get the cases from Don Smith, they are put together better than in the past," Hewicker said.

(Continued on B-13, Col. 1)

Arrest Record Reviewed

(Continued from B-12)

"He can anticipate what our questions might be. If we need more investigative work done, we get it. In the old days, sometimes we would get it and sometimes we wouldn't."

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Hewicker said the office was pleased that the county supervisors recently approved funding for a DA liason at the Police Department. With the establishment of that position, Hewicker said, the DA's office can better monitor the type of cases brought in by police and offer guidance about proper searches and evidentiary procedures.

Currently, arrests are reviewed primarily by watch commanders, who say they do their very best under extremely busy circumstances to weed through each one.

"I'm sure some (questionable arrests) get through," said Lt. Chuck Ellis, a watch commander, "because I usually hear only one side of the story. But many times, I'll call a suspect in here and talk about (the arrest) if it looks a little hinky."

Statistics kept by Smith show that in the past 10 months, felony complaints were issued by the DA's office in about 80 percent of felony arrests. In 1978, according to a California Department of Justice study, felony complaints here were issued for only 38.6 percent of all adult felony arrests.

Police officials argue that is is vital to

have provisions allowing officers to remove a potentially dangerous person from the street long enough for that person to cool down. Said O'Brien, "Certainly a person's demeanor enters into whether he is going to jail or will remain on the street, if that demeanor indicates to the officer that he will continue to be a disturbance."

"No one disagrees with that," said Duffy. "That's something different." The primary concern of county officials is that people are being jailed because they object to improper searches or other police misconduct.

"Three thousand policemen in this county make individual decisions every day about who goes into the jail for what," said Duffy. "What is the cumulative effect of those individual decisions?"

Said O'Brien, "I don't believe that attitude arrests are prevalent. I wouldn't be fool enough to say they never have happened. But when they do, we take appropriate action."

Kolender agreed that "we've got policies" to deal with the problem.

"Admittedly, we're reviewing them to see if they are adhered to on a 100 percent basis. Admittedly, they are not," he said. "But we're studying to see who we are sending to jail and why. I'm looking at that whole situation."

Peace Corps Still Holds Appeal

(Continued from B-2) the reality is that the volunteer makes more money than most of these people,"

nursing senior, wanted to know who pays for medical care caused by ailments brought on during Peace about dropping out. In fact, he said, the corps has a 30, percent attrition rate.

A third quit for medical

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